

City of San José
CLASS SPECIFICATION

TITLE: Animal Behaviorist (3259)

DEPARTMENT	ACCOUNTABLE TO	FLSA STATUS
Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services	Supervisor, Animal Services Operations	Non-exempt

CLASS SUMMARY

Conducts animal behavior assessments on shelter animals and makes recommendations for appropriate placement or euthanasia. Responds to public inquires regarding animal behavior and develops written behavioral materials. Trains adoption dogs in basic obedience and may also provide public obedience classes or private consultations to individuals. Provides direction and training to shelter volunteers. Performs other related duties as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This is a standalone classification that reports to the Supervisor, Animal Services Operations at the Animal Shelter, and has responsibility for categorizing shelter animals for adoption, rehabilitation and behavioral euthanasia. This classification differs from the Supervisor, Animal Services Operations, who has the authority to make behavioral decisions, but also has responsibility for operating the Animal Shelter and full supervisory responsibility over staff at the Animal Shelter. This classification differs from other Animal Services classifications in that it specializes in the evaluation of animal behavior, and is required to have specific training in this field. Other Animal Services classifications may be expected to recognize certain behavior in animals, and there may be overlap in some other duties shared by a variety of Animal Services classifications, but the Animal Behaviorist is the only classification with the primary duties of evaluating animal behavior, categorizing shelter animals, training animals, and advising others on animal behavior/animal handling.

Incumbents may be required to lift up to 100 pounds while handling animals and equipment; may work outside and be exposed to inclement weather, may be exposed to blood borne pathogens while using hypodermic needles on animals, may be exposed to animal scratches and bites, and may be subjected to moving mechanical parts, fumes, odors, gases, chemicals, pollens, and other airborne irritants. Incumbents in this class may need to work weekends, holidays and nights.

QUALIFICATIONS

(These qualifications are typically required. An equivalent combination of education, experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities sufficient to satisfactorily perform the duties of the job may be substituted.)

Minimum Qualifications

Education and Experience

Two years of college, with coursework in ethology, biology or a related field and three (3) years of relevant work experience in dog and cat behavior assessment and/or training.

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Required Licensing (such as driver's license, certifications, etc.)

- Valid California Driver's License
- Note: Incumbents may be required to obtain euthanasia certification within one year following employment.

Other Qualifications

(Incumbents may be required to have different combinations of the listed qualifications, or more specific job-related qualifications depending on the position.)

Basic Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

(Needed at entry into the job in order to perform the essential duties.)

- Ability to recognize, evaluate and modify undesirable dog and cat behavior in a time efficient manner
- Skill and knowledge in utilizing established positive reinforcement animal training methods and techniques
- Ability to categorize shelter animals behaviorally as adoptable, treatable or non-rehabilitatable
- Ability to handle animals humanely and safely using approved protocols and practices
- Ability to communicate effectively with other staff, volunteers and public
- Skill in the preparation and maintenance of accurate written and computer records
- Ability to use a variety of modern office machines and equipment, including personal computers Ability to use tact and good judgment when interacting with staff, volunteers and public
- Ability to develop and produce written materials utilized for behavior education
- Skill in utilizing standard animal training equipment such as leashes, collars, and restraint devices appropriate for the breed and temperament of the animal.

Desirable Qualifications

(Knowledge, skills and abilities; licenses, certificates, education, experience that is more position specific and/or likely to contribute to more successful job performance.)

- Bachelor's degree in ethology, biology or a related field
- Level II Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) Certification
- Euthanasia certification
- Skill in effective public speaking and communication
- Knowledge and comprehension of federal, state and local laws, ordinances and regulations pertaining to the care, housing, treatment and impounding of animals.
- Ability to lead and train others
- Knowledge of and exposure to all activities occurring in a high volume public animal shelter
- Skill in conducting public workshops and group dog training classes
- Ability to develop and implement enrichment programs beneficial to shelter animals
- Ability to recognize common animal diseases
- Ability to develop written policies, protocols, procedures and training manuals relative to animal behavior
- Ability to use multimedia as a training aid

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DUTY NO.	TYPICAL CLASS ESSENTIAL DUTIES: (These duties and estimated frequency are a representative sample; position assignments may vary depending on the business needs of the department.) Duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:	FRE-QUENCY*
1.	Advises and educates potential adopters on pet temperament and lifestyle compatibility.	Daily
2.	Performs animal temperament and behavior assessments and categorizes (adoptable, treatable, non-rehabilitatable) accordingly, including authorization of behavioral euthanasia.	Daily
3.	Trains adoptable dogs in basic obedience.	Daily
4.	Provides direction and training to shelter volunteers regarding the handling of animals.	Daily
5.	Responds to phone calls and other correspondence from adopters and public regarding animal behavior. Maintains records of all correspondence.	Daily
6.	Develops written behavior education and guideline materials for distribution to pet adopters and for community outreach and events.	As Required
7.	Conducts safe and humane animal handling classes for shelter staff and volunteers.	As Required
8.	Develops and implements shelter temperament and behavior testing procedures and protocols.	As Required
9.	Conducts public workshops and dog training sessions/classes.	As Required
10.	Coordinates training sessions/classes with outside or contracted dog obedience trainers.	As Required
11.	Develops and implements enrichment programs beneficial to shelter animals (such as music, training, games or other stimulus to prevent mental deterioration).	As Required
12.	Participates in and staffs community outreach events and promotions.	As Required
13.	Humanely euthanizes and disposes of animals as necessary.	As Required
14.	Acts as one of the primary contacts for members of animal rescue and foster	As Required

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15.	. Performs other duties of a similar nature or level.	As Required

*Frequency defined as %, (totaling 100%) *or* “Continuous” (daily or approximately 20%+), “Frequent”(weekly or approximately 15%+), “Occasional”(monthly or approximately 10%+), “As Required”(Intermittent or 5% or less)

CLASSIFICATION HISTORY: 3259s000; 4/05